

# FOUNDATION NEWS



A publication of Nature Foundation St. Maarten

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## Happy Birthday Nature Foundation!



This year marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Nature Foundation St. Maarten. The Foundation has experienced many trials and triumphs during the last decade.

One of the Foundation's greatest accomplishments has been achieving a marine park and the drafting of the marine park ordinance. Here are some projects NFS was involved in to help enhance the marine park as a sustainable multiple user resource:

✦ 1999: The Mooring Buoy System

✦ 1999 - 2001: A joint coral reef monitoring initiative between Nature Foundation and Reef Keeper International 2003:

✦ Artificial reef programme – "Reef Ball Project"

Nature Foundation's aims are also the preservation, management and restoration of terrestrial areas of ecological and/or historical importance. Some successes in this area are listed below:

2001 – 2002: Mangrove Replanting Project at Little Bay Pond and Fresh Pond

2001 – Present: Sea Turtle nest monitoring

2001: Nature Foundation appointed CITES (Convention for International Trade in Endangered Species of wild flora and fauna) Scientific Authority for St. Maarten. CITES aims to protect species from the detrimental effects of over-exploitation for international trade, to ensure sustainable utilization of others and to encourage cooperation between signatory Parties in achieving this aim.

Environmental resource management for preservation and conservation also has research and education/outreach as important components that serve to connect the community to the management process by employing active involvement. Education brings awareness and helps to foster stakeholder participation which in turn increases a sense of 'ownership'. The advantage of education and outreach is that they bring greater support for the protection

of the area.

For ten years NFS located in Great Bay Marina where we leased office space. After years of talking about owning our own office, we were finally able to purchase property in Cole Bay. We can now be found at Fisherman's Wharf Units 25 - 26 on Wellsburg street.

What are our plans for the next five to ten years? Generating income that will result in financial sustainability and growth which will be used to expand our operational base and services. In the future we would like to employ a director and a terrestrial park manager under whose auspices an established terrestrial park would fall. Further future plans include coordinating more scientific marine and terrestrial research.

For now we are very proud to have our own office and are certain the rest will fall into place one bit at a time.

To everyone who has supported us in whatever way during the last ten years, we say a big THANK YOU!



Chairman Jan Beaujon accepting a donation from notary Schaeapman on behalf of the Foundation



### Coming up ...

**DCNA meeting on Bonaire:  
21–26th May**

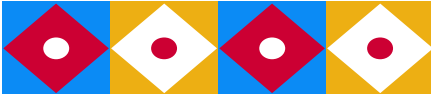


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NFS Board Members: Mr. Frank Boekhout, Mrs. Malou Carty, and Mr. Jan Beaujon at the closing with notary Jan Schaeapman


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Dear Reader,

Welcome to the first issue of FOUNDATION NEWS OF 2007. I hope you will find it informative.

We have been quite busy since the last issue with hiring new staff and getting ready for our move to our new office.

We expect this year to be financially challenging, as our contract with one of our main sponsors, IUCN-NL, will be ending at the end of March. We are also still awaiting final approval of the Marine Park Ordinance, which will allow us to collect dive and snorkel fees — a much needed source of sustainable income — and help us in our coastal zone management efforts .

In the mean time, we plan to organize fundraising events during the course of the year we hope will attract the local community. Please continue to support the Foundation in what ever you can.

We have painted, unpacked boxes and organized furniture and are finally starting to settle down. I miss the view of Great Bay from my old office window and there is still minor work to be done in our new office but in time it will become home.

Sincerely,

Beverly Mae Nisbeth  
Marine Park Manager

## New Spider Species SHHC Subsidizes Nature Foundation



Feb 19—22 PhD biology student, Sarah Crews from the University of California Berkeley made her second trip to St. Maarten, where she found a new species of

spider in the areas of Back Bay and at the Emilio Wilson Estate. She mostly researches one type of species, the Selenopoides. These spiders range from small to large, are non-web-builders and they are extremely flat and fast. The unidentified species is yet to be named. with the exception of Cuba, Sarah has visited every island in the Caribbean. For more info visit her website at [nature.berkeley.edu/~screws](http://nature.berkeley.edu/~screws)

The St. Maarten Harbour Holding Company is subsidizing Nature Foundation with NAfls 25.000. Part of the policy from the St. Maarten Harbour Holding Company is to be a social partner which is decided by the Island Government as a company shareholder. Share-buy back and long term support of various social organizations fall under this. The harbour decided to include us in its 2007 budget to support us for our work in nature conservation. The Harbour also wants to help in

whatever way possible in our future projects. Right now the sustainable subsidy is an option that will be re-evaluated yearly. This subsidy is like a birthday gift after ten years of leasing office space. We purchased an office so these funds will go directly toward our monthly mortgage. It's great large companies are starting to appreciate conservation efforts by nature conservation NGOs. Hopefully more corporate entities will partner with local organizations that work to protect our natural environment.

## New Nature Foundation Staff



Marisa Brandy, Office Manager

In November 2006 we advertised for an office manager to replace Eseld Imms

and a marine park ranger to take over from Paul Ellinger.

We were able to find a new office manager rather quickly, who started in mid December in the person of Ms. Marisa Brandy.

Marisa holds a bachelors degree in business management. She acquired 3 years of post graduate work experience in the US prior to returning to St. Maarten.

Finding a new marine park ranger, on the other hand, proved very difficult but in

the end we hired Joseph (Jose) Cijntje, who started in January 2007.

Jose's education and work experience include boat-building training and employment on various vessels as first mate.

Unfortunately, at the time of composing and finalizing this newsletter issue, Jose chose to leave the Foundation to pursue other endeavours. We thank him for the brief time he spent at the Foundation and wish him good success further.



# NEW

Send us your thoughts on environmental issues or your favourite natural/heritage/cultural photograph and we will place your entry in the next issue of *Foundation News* due June 2007.

## NGOs give recommendation document to government

St. Maarten's Environmental, Natural and Cultural Heritage Conservation Foundations in a joint effort presented all political parties running in this year's election with their recommendations for the improvement of St. Maarten's environmental legislation and the protection of St. Maarten's Natural and Cultural Heritage. With this document the Foundations have urged political parties to consider and incorporate these points into their (governing) programs in view of environmentally sustainable development, the protection of the island's Natural and Cultural Heritage and St. Maarten's future status as a country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. This transitional period should be seen as one of opportunity for environmental and cultural reforms and the drafting of new legislation where necessary.



From left to right: Eliane Polack—Ocean Care; Jadira Veen— St. Maarten Pride Foundation; Elsje Bosch—St. Maarten Heritage Foundation; Beverly Mae Nisbeth— Nature Foundation St. Maarten; Rueben Thompson— Emilio Wilson Heritage Foundation (not shown)



## Mullet Pond Coalition

In a proactive advocacy move for sustainable development, Environmental Protection in the Caribbean (EPIC), Nature Foundation St. Maarten, Ocean-Care, and PRIDE Foundation have formed the Mullet Pond Coalition in order to advocate for the protection of the mangroves and seagrass beds of Mullet Pond. Specifically, the Coalition supports the zoning of Mullet Pond, located between Point Pirouette and Mullet Beach, as a protected area in which it is prohibited to remove and/or cut existing vegetation, including mangroves and seagrass, within 15 meters of the lagoon shoreline.

The coalition formed in response to development plans recently posted on [sxmprivateeye.com](http://sxmprivateeye.com) which describe an 85 yacht marina, including mega yachts up to 300 feet, and 32 yacht villas with private docks.

If you would like to help make a difference please visit [www.epicislands.org](http://www.epicislands.org) for an online petition, to download printable petitions, or to see a sample letter to government.

## 27th Annual International Sea Turtle Symposium 2007



Picture: participants of the Environmental Education workgroup, led by Carl Lloyd, Director of Ocean Spirits, Grenada.

February 2007 Nature Foundation participated in the 27th Annual Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation. It was held from 22 to 28 February in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, USA. During this event, people involved in different aspects of sea turtle conservation from all over the world present their recent work in oral or poster presentations.

The first two days were reserved for regional meetings (e.g., WIDECAST, Latin American, African, Mediterranean, Indian Ocean). Approximately 90 participants from 40 different locations in the Caribbean were present for the WIDECAST meeting (Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network). This meeting is an opportunity for all participants to get updated on the work done by others in various fields of sea turtle conservation: from genetic studies to economic incentives to raise the local support for conservation efforts. Highlight was the presentation of the new database of essential nesting habitats throughout the region, for which all countries had added their local information of nesting areas and their main critical threats. A new component was the opportunity to brainstorm in work groups about necessary future needs and opportunities for different areas of sea turtle conservation work. The presented outcome will help WIDECAST in future directions of its activities.

Nature Foundation presented its educational programme "The story of Captain Scout of The Black Turtle". As the title already implies, the WATER topic is fitted into a pirate theme. The programme focuses on marine

life and the different characteristics of water. The major awareness goal of this project is that students learn about the importance of water and oceans. The anticipated outcome is a loss of fear of what occurs in the ocean and an increased respect for marine ecosystems. The programme is fitting for students in cycle one and the newly installed cycle 2 (former grades 3 and 4) and is under construction to fit grades 5 and 6.

As in all awareness projects, the sea turtle mascot, Scout is involved. Cursed by the spell of greed, he becomes the wicked captain of the pirate ship "The Black Turtle" and he and his crew sail out to find a hidden treasure. The story is illustrated by an animation slide show and comes with a recorded play on CD. Each of their adventures during this journey is the introduction to one new lesson on water. Topics that are discussed include: scary marine life (or rather, defensive survival strategies that only succeed by their chilling effects); fun facts about the different eating habits of marine life; the water cycle; and mangrove ecology. The programme ends with topics that discuss the physical characteristics of

surface tension. In the end, Scout is freed from the curse of greed and returns to the sea as the friendly turtle he always was.

The response from other countries on the created educational tool was very positive and there is an interest to share this programme with WIDECAST members. Nature Foundation is now researching the possibilities of publishing the materials for distribution.

The symposium ran from Saturday February 24<sup>th</sup> through Tuesday the 27<sup>th</sup> with full day sessions in two different rooms. Participation in this year's symposium was very informative and we are inspired to continue our sea turtle research and monitoring. Nature Foundation would like to thank WIDECAST and WWF for their sponsorship and for making this year's participation possible.

The new sea turtle nesting season starts on St. Maarten starts in April. We plan to inform residents and hotels in the 7 nesting areas of Dutch St. Maarten about nesting activities in their neighbourhood and how they can help with monitoring and increasing nest and hatching success.



School children watching the adventures of Captain Scout



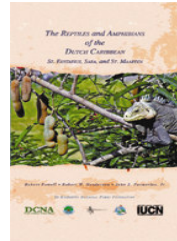
# SUPPORT NATURE FOUNDATION



## Bumper stickers

2 bumper stickers to support the marine and terrestrial wildlife of St. Maarten.

\$2 per sticker



## Book

Dr. Robert Powell's beautifully illustrated book on the Reptiles and Amphibians of the Dutch Windward Islands.

Available in paperback and Hardback.

From \$25.00



## T-Shirts

High quality Fruit of the Loom cotton T-shirts

Price: \$15.00

Available in Sizes: S, M, L, XL, XXL



## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Nature Foundation St. Maarten is in need of any interested individuals willing to donate their time and effort to a worthy cause.

New volunteers will be able to assist with the following projects:

- Fundraising
- Education programs
- Wildlife monitoring
- Office assistance

Additionally Scuba divers are needed to help with the Foundation's ongoing mooring programme with the St. Maarten Marine Park.

To volunteer or for more information, please contact us at 544-4267 or by e-mail at [info@naturefoundationsxm.org](mailto:info@naturefoundationsxm.org) or visit the website at: [www.naturefoundationsxm.org](http://www.naturefoundationsxm.org)

# THANK YOU!

We wish to acknowledge the following organizations, individuals and businesses which have recently made donations to the Nature Foundation. We are incredibly grateful for their support.

- Stichting DOEN
- IUCN-NL
- Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance (DCNA)
- Prins Bernhard Cultuur Fonds
- INNO-WWF
- MINA
- KNAP
- St. Maarten Harbour Holding Co.
- Bunchies's Garage